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SUBJECT: NEW HOUSING MINISTER RUDECINDO VEGA

REF: A) LIMA 3489 (B) LIMA 3476 (C) LIMA 3549 (D) LIMA 3518

1. Summary. New Housing Minister Rudecindo Vega has served the last three years as Chief of Staff to outgoing Housing Minister Carlos Bruce. Since 2003, he also served as Technical Secretary to the GOP Interministerial Commission on Social Issues. Vega is a respected technocrat. He has had successful posts in various GOP offices dealing with decentralization, the Human Rights Ombudsman and anti-corruption. Vega has also worked with prominent Peruvian and international NGOs on election reform and human rights. End Summary.

2. President Toledo swore in Rudecindo Vega Carreazo as his new Minister of Housing, Construction and Sanitation on 8/16. He had been Chief of Staff to outgoing Minister Carlos Bruce since 2002. Since 2003 he has also served as the Technical Secretary for the GOP's Interministerial Commission on Social Issues. Through mid 2002, Vega was the Chief of Staff for the Prime Minister.

3. Vega has a long history of professional work on national government reform issues, particularly decentralization, anti-corruption and electoral reform. From 2001 to 2002 he worked extensively on decentralization issues, serving as Executive Secretary of the Technical Secretariat for Decentralization and President of the Executive Commission for Regional and Local Connectivity. As President of the Commission for Building Regional and Local Capacity, he helped formulate the national plan for training regional authorities. For several years he has produced and anchored a television program focused on decentralization for the state television station.

4. Vega contributed to government reform as Director of the Office of Institutional Development in the national Human Rights Ombudsman's Office from 1997 to 1998. He worked in 2002 as a consultant to the World Bank on anti-corruption and justice reform, as well as Technical Secretary for the GOP Ministry of Justice Anti-corruption Program.

5. Vega was Technical Secretary and Director of Citizen Education at the respected Peruvian election watchdog NGO Transparencia from 1995 to 2000. He served as an election observer in Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. During the same time he worked as a consultant to the InterAmerican Institute of Human Rights and for the National Democratic Institute, a U.S. NGO.

6. Vega earned a law degree in 1988 from the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru in Lima, where he has also taught courses through the present. He was born in 1963 in a small town in the northern Amazonas Department.

7. COMMENT: Outgoing Housing Minister Carlos Bruce will be a hard act to follow, as he was one of Toledo's longest-serving and popular ministers (Refs A and B). The media have reacted favorably to Vega's appointment, and NGOs that worked with Vega speak favorably of him. With his solid record of government service, Vega can be expected to continue Bruce's popular and successful efforts to improve access to housing for middle- and lower-income Peruvians.

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